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ABSTRACT

Designed for administrators and teachers at the community college/secondary/elementary levels, the guide is a reference source for establishing and developing citizen advisory councils. A section on Advisory Councils--Planning discusses the need for citizen advisory councils, definition and purpose, advisory council types, and operational structures. The following section on Advisory Councils--Organizing outlines necessary steps pertaining to: written guidelines, charter, selection committee, selection of members and committee members, ad hoc committees, member qualifications, nomination of members, number of members, member term, attendance, officers, school representative, meetings, agenda preparation, and the first meeting. Sample agendas for first and second meetings and a sample charter also are included. A third section, Advisory Councils--Utilizing, presents topics related to operating techniques: successful operational techniques, common characteristics of an effective council, written recommendations, school action-council recommendations, absenteeism, member recognition, a checklist of what an advisory council can do, effectiveness and criticisms, and precautions for success. (EA)

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A Guide for Planning, Organizing, and Utilizing Advisory Councils

Division of Vocational and Technical Education

Illinois Office of Education
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State Superintendent of Education

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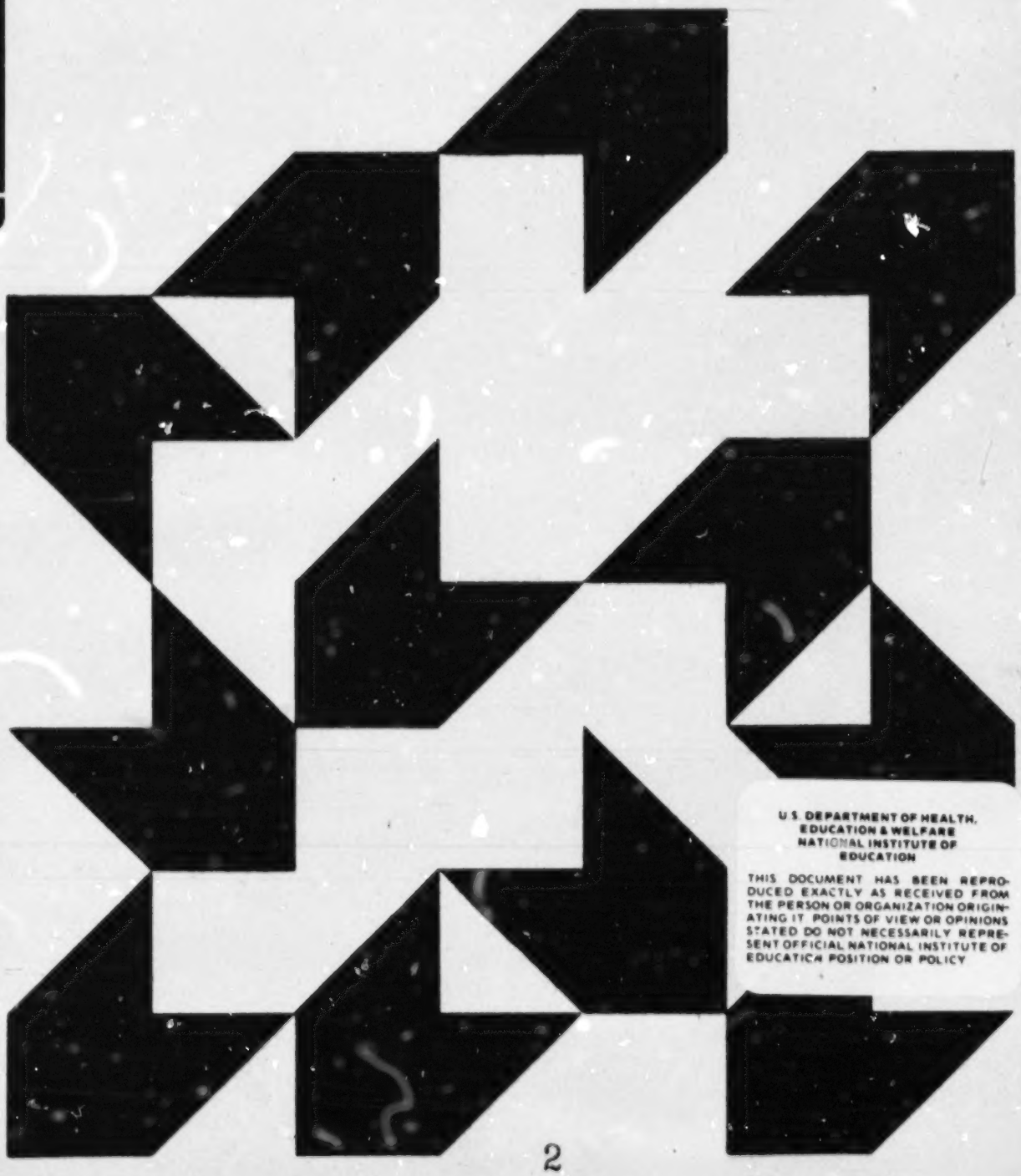

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FOREWORD

Advisory Council Bulletins—Planning, Organizing, Utilizing —are designed for use as reference material to educators. Much of the information can be applied and/or adapted to community college, secondary, and K-8 use.

Terminology applicable to all educational institutions has been utilized where possible. Tolerance is requested where terms are used that are not normally acceptable to your educational group.

ADVISORY COUNCILS
PLANNING

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SCHOOL/COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION
SPECIAL MESSAGE

To have successful citizen participation in your school, it is important that a system of Citizen Advisory Councils be planned and implemented. The System should be tailored to meet the overall career education efforts of your school. The best council is one planned to fit into the system and to fill a need for the local school and community.

Councils should meet often enough to accomplish the planned work program and the members given opportunity to be active, involved, and effective. Members of the councils will be your school's best community salespeople for your educational programs.

It is imperative that a school representative be responsible for each citizen advisory council. School representatives should be given specific duties in relation to the council. This should not, however, discourage administrators and interested faculty from attending council meetings.

The coordination of the advisory council system will be made easier by arranging for a copy of the minutes of all council meetings to be filed with a selected administrator. Advance notice of all meetings will allow time to encourage selected administrators to attend in an ex officio capacity. Complete records of membership should be kept in a central place.

Schools in areas of small population need citizen advisory councils to act in general as well as specialized capacities. It is not unusual to utilize only one council with representatives from each occupational cluster area.

Citizen advisory councils need to be properly handled or poor public relations could result and have a detrimental and undesirable effect on the standing of the school within the community. It is recommended, therefore, that the Citizen Advisory Councils be given high priority, attention, and effort.

WHY CITIZEN ADVISORY COUNCILS

Utilizing an Advisory Council of interested, able, and concerned citizens can be the most productive and relevant method to involve the community in education. It is a vital link between the community and the school. Council members can advise on local education matters, including the total occupational education program; make recommendations; and provide service otherwise not available.

Occupational education programs must have direct lines of communication with the professions, business, industry, and public services if they are to be relevant and up to date. The purpose of such educational programs is to provide awareness, exploration, and orientation to career clusters as well as actual preparation and training for specific careers.

The involvement of volunteer, knowledgeable citizens enhances important public acceptance for career education. In essence, an advisory council can advise on:

. Community and student needs

. Career education programs

. Community support for the school, its policies, and educational curricula

. Recognition of student accomplishments

. Informational sources for educational experiences.

DEFINITION

A Citizen Advisory Council is composed of a group of persons within the community selected to collectively advise regarding educational efforts. Members predominately are from outside the field of education and are chosen for their specialized knowledge and/or general standing in the community.

An Advisory Council is usually a formally organized group for a specific educational purpose, operating under certain rules, and approved by proper school authority. The council is most often part of a system of councils operating within a school.

PURPOSE

The purpose of a Citizen Advisory Council is to give advisory service and collectively make recommendations to the school, the students, faculty, administrators, and board of education concerning various segments of education for which each council is formed.

An Advisory Council engages in activities pertinent to priority problems and planning applicable to the school or college and will utilize evaluation, investigation, or survey prior to the offering of advice through written recommendations.

CAREER

A Citizen Advisory Council for Career Education is concerned with the entire educational program offered by the school. Emphasis is placed on the utilization of the career education concept for education.

VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL

A Citizen Advisory Council for Vocational-Technical Education is concerned with all occupational areas of the vocational-technical education program.

OCCUPATIONAL

A Citizen Advisory Council is concerned with one specific type of occupational program, trade field, or family of occupations.

AREA VOCATIONAL CENTER

An Area Vocational Center Advisory Council consists of educators and citizens representing the participating educational districts. Members are concerned with occupational programs for the school systems served by the area vocational center.

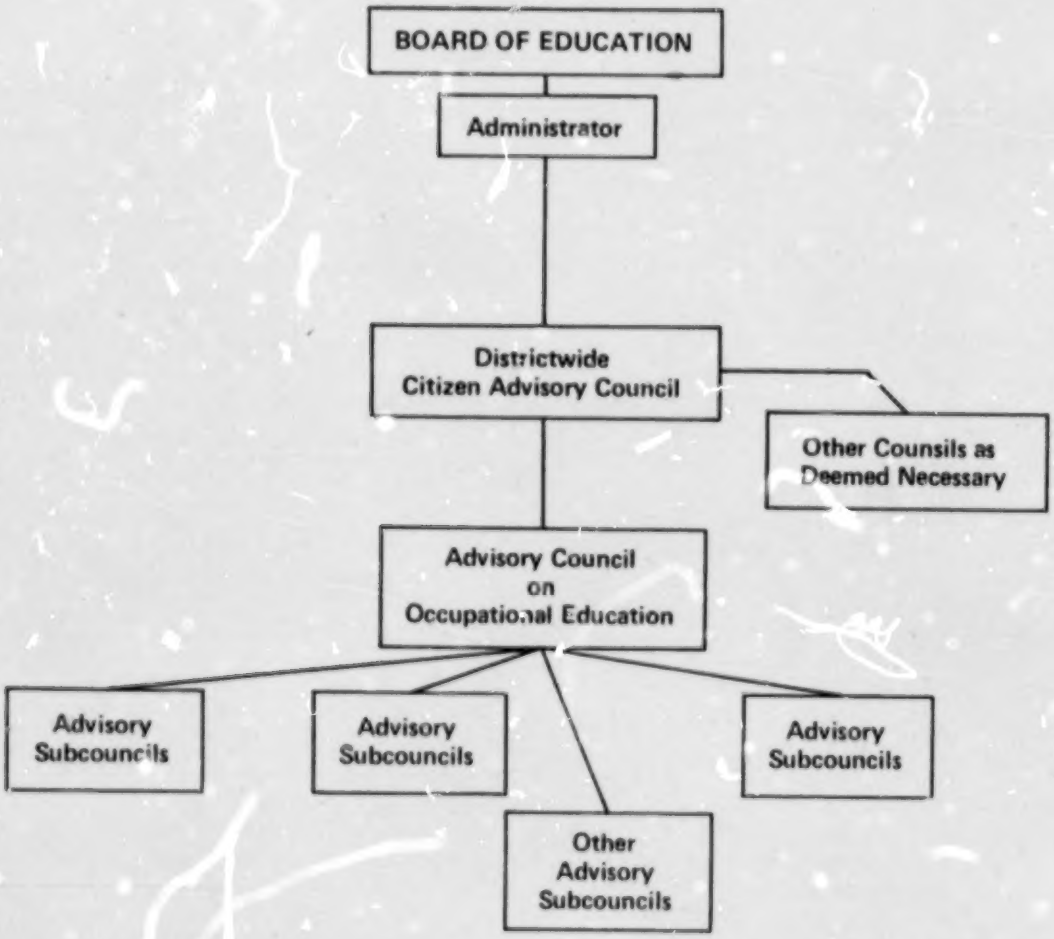
The following sample chart is intended to illustrate flexible operational structures for planning a citizen advisory council system adapted to the characteristics of each educational agency.

Schools and colleges with large student populations and many different educational programs will need to have several subcouncils. Very small districts will often utilize only one council whose members will be asked to advise in a variety of interest areas. Much planning should be devoted to the system most adaptable to the school district. Charges in the system are probable as time and use indicate need. It is recommended that each educational agency make the advisory council system chart available to all faculty, administrators, and involved community people.

There are several approaches to a system of councils, all of which have proven successful. The most popular in occupational education is the departmental program approach which utilizes advisory councils by department with subcouncils for individual programs. Another is functional, utilizing councils assigned school problems like cooperative education, budget, career orientation, facilities and equipment, curriculum, etc.

Most school districts will find that a system of councils will be a combination of approaches. For example: A career education advisory council for the elementary school seldom has more than one council operating functionally. As councils are planned for secondary and colleges, the departmental program approach might be used. School districts, however, should have an occupational advisory council that considers problems applicable to the total occupational program. Members could be representatives from departmental councils.

SAMPLE CHART FOR ADVISORY COUNCIL SYSTEM



NOTE: Small districts may utilize lesser number of councils

ADVISORY COUNCILS
ORGANIZING

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ORGANIZING THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Proper organizing procedures for an Advisory Council System and for individual councils are critically important to future success. Being successful means there is likelihood your school will enjoy excellent community relations. The resulting enthusiastic career education program will help provide student graduates with knowledge and skills needed for careers or to prepare for higher education. The acceptance of graduates by the employing community will demonstrate increased confidence of employers in the educational experiences students receive in your occupational programs.

The following pages outline steps necessary for organizing citizen advisory councils. To establish a system of councils, refer to the section: Advisory Councils—Planning.

WRITTEN GUIDELINES

Guidelines for advisory councils, as sanctioned by the school governing board, should contain the following:

. Profile of school and the student population

. Policy and philosophy of purpose in regard to career and occupational education

. School policy regarding advisory councils

. Outline of purposes and functions of various types of councils

. General duties of council and its relationship in an advisory capacity

. Criteria and selection method for members

. Number and term of members

. Council channels of communication

. Duties of council chairperson

. Duties of school or college representative

. Handling of council records and minutes.

Many school administrations have general guidelines and organizational charts for advisory councils to aid in their formation and use. These should be carefully studied to insure all of the above are reflected. Guidelines should be made available to each member.

CHARTER

The Charter represents the official sanction of the school for the operation of the Advisory Council. It is important to establish official recognition to provide a basis of future communication and effectiveness. See sample charter on page 16.

SELECTION COMMITTEE

The selection committee for nominating future members is made up of two or three members of the community and the school representative who will work

with that particular advisory council. This committee is appointed by the chief administrator of the school. The community members are selected for their wide acquaintance and knowledge of expertise and background of people in the area. They should have a respected standing as a community, business, and/or industrial leader. The administrator in charge of the advisory council system often serves on this committee.

Although this method of nominating members for an advisory council is controversial, it has proven of value. Proper use of an independent selection committee eliminates membership committed only to the school viewpoint and will reflect the varied opinions of the community.

The selection committee should serve for short intervals and only for the purpose of nominating individuals to serve on advisory councils. Meetings are called by the administrator in charge of the school advisory council system.

The work of the selection committee should be conducted in close collaboration with the designated school representative. This allows input by the representative. It would be difficult for the selection committee to function properly without specific knowledge of what each advisory council is expected to accomplish and how it will fit into the school advisory council system. This procedure tends to eliminate the possibility of an advisory council selecting succeeding members and becoming self-perpetuating with one point of view.

SELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS—SOURCE

. School administrators, school boards, and/or boards of trustees

. Local Chamber of Commerce, professional organizations, civic clubs, and labor organizations

. Faculty involved with the advisory council and the program which will receive its advisory services

. Advisory council members, especially present and former presiding officers

. Community, industry, and business

. Students or former students.

SELECTION OF MEMBERS

The selection committee should make every effort to name individuals known for their expertise and experience in appropriate occupational areas. They

should be community citizens with known integrity. It is also imperative members have an interest in education, the school, and the educational programs. Often, for occupational councils, a particular industry is asked to suggest potential members.

If selection is for an advisory council operating on a broad level, then community leaders representing a broad section or faction of the community are necessary. Selection of representative and qualified persons from the community for the particular duties involved is of high importance to the success of the council. Persons chosen should have expertise and experience in the particular area for which the council is being formed.

AD HOC COMMITTEES

Ad hoc committees are used as a prelude to forming a more permanent advisory council. The selection committee may prefer this method. Such a committee is especially valuable when a certain occupational program is to be started and there is need for complete initial planning in relation to community requirements for employment competencies.

After the ad hoc committee has completed the initial planning and made recommendations, it can also recommend members to serve on the permanent advisory council. This method is effective for new programs in specialized occupational areas to obtain interested, knowledgeable community people. No one should be recommended or barred from membership because of affiliation with any organization, institution, race, or creed.

QUALIFICATIONS

. Leadership, expertise, and work experience in the educational area

. Local geographical distribution

. Education and/or the equivalent field experience

. Interest in the school, education, and purpose of council

. Age (if pertinent)

. Occupation—with specialized knowledge

. Governmental and organizational affiliations that are pertinent

. Time—will the nominee be willing to devote enough time

. Individual viewpoint

. Courage to express ideas and convictions

. Representative of community interests

. Personal integrity, responsibility, willingness to cooperate, constructive attitude, and tolerance of various points of view.

Nominees should represent more than one special interest or group. Advisory councils should present both management and labor viewpoints. A student, or recent graduate member, is valuable to furnish the student viewpoint.

Before making nominations, it is good procedure for the selection committee to discuss with community or occupational groups the qualifications of potential council members. Such procedure is important to insure community and group interest and backing for council activities. This is most valuable in large metropolitan communities where knowing people in various industry and business groups is difficult. Care must be taken that nominees are not dominated by any particular interest group.

WHO SHOULD BE A MEMBER

COMMUNITY

Community members make up the bulk of the council. The broader the duties of the council, the greater the need for community leaders.

It is emphasized that occupational councils often find specialized members more valuable to certain programs, for instance:

. In a large company the office manager may be more valuable to the office secretarial advisory council than the company manager whose expertise may be much broader in scope.

. An experienced registered nurse may prove more beneficial to the nursing program than a practicing physician.

. An industrial supervisor may be able to identify with specific types of industrial-oriented programs than an engineer with wider responsibilities.

. An experienced educator from another school or college may offer specialized expertise as well as articulation of occupational programs.

. Officials from other agencies in the area may often offer needed specialized knowledge.

STUDENT OR FORMER STUDENTS

Student members are selected from three sources—present student in the program, one recently graduated and working, or a student involved in a

college program. This provides the younger viewpoint always needed to remind the "older heads" of the predominant purpose—that of helping educate and train students.

EX OFFICIO

Some members who are serving permanently or temporarily without a vote are in an ex officio capacity. These members include the school representative, other educators from the school, and all who are cooperating in a temporary capacity.

Ex officio members may be appointed by majority vote of the council to serve in a consulting capacity with special problems and/or projects. Consultants can be of great help to the council activities but their membership lasts only as long as their special duty is needed.

Ex officio members from faculty and administration should be encouraged to attend and express opinions on problems. This allows the council members the benefit of a variety of approaches before reaching a decision.

NOMINATION OF MEMBERS

Nomination of members for a new advisory council is important. The suggested steps are as follows:

. The selection committee formulates a preliminary, unpublicized list of nominees and alternates. This list is submitted to the administrator in charge of coordinating the councils.

. The administrator submits the list through school channels for approval. It is essential that board approval be obtained before personal contact is made. If this is done, the request to serve is not contingent on future board approval.

. If the nominee is an employee of a firm, approval of management should be obtained. This encourages interest in the council and insures better attendance at meetings.

. Nominees are individually contacted to determine if they will serve. The person or committee making the contact should be able to explain the purpose and function of the council, the number of members, and the length of term for that particular council. If a nominee declines, an alternate is then contacted.

After individual approval is obtained, this procedure should follow:

. On school or college letterhead, mail an official letter of appointment signed by the chief administrator or chairperson of the school governing

body. This gives the new member the official status of being important to the school or college.

. Include with the letter an agenda for the first meeting giving location, time, and date. If available, also enclose a listing of other members.

. Enclose a copy of the advisory council guidelines of the school or college, or the "Advisory Council Member" bulletin as published by DVTE.

. A postal card or a form with a self-addressed, stamped envelope should also be sent to the member for his signature and return acknowledging attendance at the first meeting. A deadline should be set for the return and if not received by the deadline, an alternate member should be appointed.

NUMBER OF MEMBERS

The average advisory council should be large enough to be representative of the community and small enough to encourage active individual participation. Generally, councils concerned with overall school problems are larger because of the need for wide community representation.

It is recommended that vocational/technical and occupational type councils number not more than 12, including the ex officio school members. This size council has proven manageable from the standpoint of planning, program of work, and adequacy of representation.

Small councils are inclined to meet more often on an informal basis, thereby accomplishing more specific work. A friendly setting encourages frank discussions and results in more positive, constructive, and practical recommendations.

On a council with wide overall concerns, having representatives from the occupational type councils often will provide specialized expertise plus wide community representation. If, however, other expertise is needed to handle specific problems, consultants may be called in for temporary assignments.

Councils are less numerous in small schools and often the members serve on a general advisory council as well as the small occupational type. Sometimes it is a matter of "wearing different hats" where the large council meets to consider overall problems and then breaks into smaller, more specialized meetings with appropriate school representatives.

After a school program has proven successful with good public relations and advisory councils have achieved good work, many influential groups and individuals may become extremely interested in being represented on the council. In such situations there is a temptation to widen the representa-

tion on the council; however, this would tend to make it unwieldly and ineffective. Too many members have a tendency to limit the number of meetings and the only work accomplished is often on the subcommittee level. It is strongly suggested that the policy of limited number on the council be maintained and the system of rotation of membership be adhered, thereby allowing different viewpoints and contributions.

MEMBER TERM OF SERVICE

It is recommended that advisory council members serve for a term of three years. The reason for this is to allow members sufficient time to become personally involved and to prove beneficial to the school.

It is suggested that each of the original members of the council draw lots for one, two, and three-year terms. In each year of the first three years, one third of the membership will be replaced. After the first three years each member will then be serving a three-year term and a regular turnover of representation on the council will have developed. This insures new members each year with varied experience and expertise and allows others in the community to make their contribution to the school educational program. With two thirds of the membership continuing, it allows continuity in leadership and needed stability for council operation.

A person serving a term as a member should be ineligible for reappointment until one year has elapsed. Some valuable, interested former members can be utilized as consultants for specific parts of the program, but for a limited time only. When a qualified member has served only a one- or two-year term because the advisory council was new, an exception to the rule could be considered.

ATTENDANCE

The practice of sending representatives or alternates to attend an advisory council meeting should be discouraged or even forbidden in the council rules. The reasons include:

. The member of an advisory council has been requested to become a member because of expertise, experience, community standing, or other special personal attribute. It is difficult to send a substitute who will bring to the meeting all the personal advantages of the regular member.

. The regular member who sends a substitute loses much of the contact and background.

It is, therefore, advisable to enforce the rule that any member missing attendance at three consecutive council meetings, without petitioning the council in writing with adequate reasons as approved by majority vote of

the council, automatically ceases to be an official member. Notification of a member missing two meetings should be arranged, but neglect of this should not affect the removal rule. Nonactive members prevent potential members from making contributions.

ADVISORY COUNCIL OFFICERS

CHAIRPERSON

The success of the advisory council depends to a great extent on the ability and enthusiasm of the elected chairperson. This important officer should be a member from the community. How he/she operates will often make the difference as to whether or not the council is effective.

Although the chairperson is often elected by the members of the council, it is important that either the school representative or the chief administrator outline to the members at their first meeting the qualifications and duties of the chairperson.

Qualifications

. Interest and willingness to work with the school representative on the agenda, meeting notices, minutes, dissemination, etc.

. Good discussion leader, allowing and encouraging viewpoints to be presented

. Ability to bring the council members to a vote and make majority recommendations with respect for the viewpoints of others

. Respect of other members

. Served at least one year (if possible) on the council and knows its purpose and function

. Ability and willingness to make appearances before school authorities and/or in public to explain and justify council recommendations.

If the advisory council is new or being reorganized, the election of the chairperson should be postponed to allow the members to get acquainted. To get the feel of the council functions, an acting presiding officer may be asked to serve during the interim period.

Responsibilities

. Working with the school representative and council members in setting the meeting dates and making arrangements

. Being the driving force behind planning the functions of the council and working with the school on an acceptable agenda

. Presiding at all council meetings

. Insuring a good personal relationship with all council members

. Working with the school representative on needed information and necessary follow up of council activities and reports.

It is often advantageous for the chairperson and school representative to organize the council work into sections or areas with a subcommittee to work in separate areas. This encourages contact with various people for reports of progress in meetings.

Council meetings conducted without adhering to strict rules of order provide a desirable, friendly atmosphere. The chairperson should provide leadership; however, members should be given an opportunity to express their viewpoints. Firmness and fairness are expected.

Techniques

. Open and close meeting on time

. Review and present all pertinent information

. Obtain views of each member on each item on the agenda

. Maintain all discussion to the subject-matter at hand

. Summarize often and obtain general agreement by group decision

. Make sure all council recommendations are written and recorded properly in the minutes

. Make plans for the next meeting.

VICE-CHAIRPERSON

The vice-chairperson is important to an advisory council since he/she is in charge of meetings in the absence of the presiding officer. Other important duties are to help in forming agendas and planning the program of work. Experience obtained for the possibility of being elected chairperson is helpful to the continuity of the council.

SECRETARY

The secretary is usually furnished by the school or college and is not an officer of the council. It is an important function for a successful operating advisory council. Duties include: taking the minutes; assembling and disseminating minutes to all members, selected administrators, and faculty; writing of council recommendations as voted; mailing of meeting notices and agendas; reminder phone calls; preparing special reports; and working closely with the council chairperson and the school representative. The secretary to an advisory council should seldom be the school representative.

SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE

A school representative with responsibility of working with the council must be appointed. The representative is very important but has an ex officio status. The advice and recommendations of the advisory council should be decisions of the citizen group. When the recommendations are presented to the school authority, it will be known a school vote was not included.

The identity of the school representative depends upon whether the function of the advisory council is to be broad or specific. Broad duties would favor the appointment of the administrator in charge of broader educational responsibilities. If the council is to work with a specific educational program, then it is advantageous for both the school and the council to designate the person in charge of that program to work with the council. This arrangement maintains the close contact necessary for occupational advisory councils to be effective and prove beneficial to the school.

Responsibilities

- Work with the chairperson in determining responsibility. What the chairperson does not do, the school representative often does.
- With the help of the chairperson, plan the agenda for the next meeting
- Present new, challenging problems for the council, when needed
- Prepare special reports, if needed, including report on action taken on past recommendations and general progress report on items
- Invite the principal, superintendent, president or dean and selected members of the administration, faculty, counseling staff and special guests
- Arrange for secretarial assistance
- Be prepared with explanations of school information, if requested.

MINUTES

The minutes are a summary of important matters that took place at the meeting. Personal opinions or word-for-word report of statements are not necessary. Conciseness and brevity are required. Minutes are not for publication without approval of the council and school. The official minutes are a record of community attitude, individual opinions from expertise in the field, and group opinion on the educational problems before the council.

Motions, decisions, and commitment of members should be recorded. Written recommendations, as voted, should be verbatim as submitted to school authority. The recommendations should be signed by the person responsible for their dissemination in order that future questions may be forwarded to this person. All minutes should be disseminated quickly, with copies in a central place in the school.

Include in the minutes the names of members attending; names of members absent; names of school people and guests; date, place, and time of meeting; time meeting was called to order; summary of important points of reports; and summary of discussions.

Minutes should be mailed within one week following the meeting to all council members, selected faculty, administrators, principal, superintendent, and members of the community or industry who might be interested. Undue delay of mailing is detrimental to the effectiveness of the meeting for the following reasons:

. Members unable to attend want to know what happened at the meeting. A long delay encourages a loss of interest.

. Administrators not in attendance want to know outcome of discussions and recommendations which may have a bearing on school decision—particularly anything requiring action or immediate consideration.

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

Educators experienced in the successful techniques of working with Citizen Advisory Councils will usually state, without reservation, that an advisory council meeting less often than quarterly is seldom active, involved, and successful. Many councils find it necessary to meet as often as weekly in order to accomplish certain pending work subject to short-term deadlines. It is amazing how willing, involved advisory councils will volunteer the amount of time necessary to accomplish certain projects.

When a council has accomplished certain deadline work and finished necessary planning sessions, it is often feasible to adjust to quarterly meetings. It is suggested that the decision on the number and dates of meetings be left to the council members—particularly after they are aware of the problems and challenges.

If the school or college has arrived at the unusual stage of not having sufficient problems or activities for a certain advisory council to be involved, consideration should be given to discontinuing that council or possibly realigning or combining its function with others in the council system. Before such drastic action is taken, however, it is recommended that the school authorities study and evaluate the reasons for the council becoming ineffective.

MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

- Establish the next meeting date and time as far in advance as possible
- Mail agenda to members, selected school officials, and faculty at least two weeks prior to meeting date. Give details—such as place of meeting, parking, tour arrangements, etc.
- Check meeting room and arrangements, meeting supplies (ash trays, pencils, pads, etc.), and equipment (blackboard, chalk, audio-visual, screen, table, chairs, etc.). Avoid a room located close to gymnasium, student meetings, etc., with distracting noise.
- Anticipate number in attendance and prepare for seating. People standing set a poor atmosphere for a productive meeting.
- Arrange for name cards or badges for identification of members and others regular in attendance. Identification cards should be available for visitors.
- Use proper advance procedures, such as day-before reminder phone calls for meeting; calls to subcommittee chairperson to determine progress and status of written recommendations to the school; special invitations to consultants and administrators; background information from other community people on specific problems, etc.

PREPARATION OF AGENDA

The preparation of a meeting agenda should be given careful attention by both the advisory council chairperson and the school representative. The members must be made to feel there is good reason to attend. If there is a challenging subject to discuss, it should be listed. Interesting agendas should result in well-conducted, interesting meetings.

The school representative should be very flexible and willing to adjust the agenda to the amount of responsibility the council chairperson is willing to assume. The presiding officer should also be aware of the topics the school would like to have discussed. Many agenda topics are decided in former meetings. These should always be honored. A topic suggested by a member should also be included. Agendas should be prepared at least two weeks in advance of meetings. It is true that often late changes have to be made, but this should not discourage early preparation.

An advisory council needs to decide upon priority of certain problems. Priorities are the basis for a program of work for a council, which is the source for most agendas.

THE FIRST MEETING

The first meeting of an advisory council on any educational level should be carefully planned as organizational and a matter of orientation to the new members. The essential objective is to have the new members leave the first meeting with the feeling and knowledge that:

. The council is going to serve an important function for the school or college.

. It has the backing and recognition of the highest school authority.

. The council has advisory status only, with no decision-making rights.

. Each member respects other members of the council.

. The challenges and problems, as presented, are worthwhile.

. The members are enthused about the function of the council.

The superintendent or college president should introduce the school representative, other school personnel, and the presiding officer; then briefly explain:

. The purpose and function of the school advisory council system

. The role and function of the school representative serving in an ex officio, nonvoting status

. The qualifications and description of the duties of the permanent chairperson

. The granting of the school charter to the new council.

If feasible, the first meeting could include a luncheon or dinner, preferably in the school setting. As part of the agenda it may be interesting and informative to include a tour of the educational facilities as existing or proposed.

The role of the school representative at the first meeting is:

. Being well prepared, brief, and to the point; be humble, but confident; ask, not demand; show interest and sincerity.

. Calling on each new member for a self-introduction and work resume. Formality is necessary. Informality and first names can be achieved as the members work together and get better acquainted.

. Explaining the specific purpose, function, and need of the new council.

. Handing out the school advisory council handbook, which includes school policy with rules and regulations; a statement of lines of communication and authority illustrating the advisory council system; a list of all advisory councils in action; and a bulletin explaining the role of a member.

. Mentioning some of the basic rules and bylaws the council will be expected to vote on at the next meeting.

. Challenging the new council with one or two immediate problems for which the school has an immediate need for study and recommendations. For instance, a task analysis of employable skills and knowledge in the occupations for which students are to be trained.

. Explaining that the next meeting will include the determination of an organized program of work, the election of officers, the appointment of subcommittees, the determination of frequency of meetings, and the date and place of the next meeting.

SAMPLE AGENDA - FIRST MEETING

School Superintendent or College President
  Welcome
  Introduction of presiding officer
  Granting council charter

School Representative
  Introduction of members
  Role as advisory and relationship to total advisory council system
  Suggested school priorities for the council program of work
  Tour of facilities

Presiding Officer
  Consideration of program of work
  Outline of next meeting activity
  Setting date, time, and location of next meeting

SAMPLE AGENDA - SECOND MEETING

Presiding Officer
Call to order
Minutes of past meeting
Election of council officers
Rules and bylaws of council
Develop program of work - short- and long-term
Frequency of meetings
Date, time, and location of next meeting
Adjournment

ADVISORY COUNCIL SAMPLE CHARTER

The Board of Education of _____ on this ____ day of _____, 19___, authorizes the establishment of a continuing committee to be known as the Occupational Advisory Council for _____ (occupational program—Health Occupations, Industrial Oriented, etc.). This council is to be organized and conducted under procedures to be proposed by the appropriate school representative after receiving advice from the school staff and other suitable consultants and upon approval by the Board of Education.

The purpose of the Occupational Advisory Council shall be to give advice and assistance to the appropriate instructional and administrative staff of the institution concerning the development, operation, and/or evaluation of a particular instructional program. The council shall also render services to all involved.

The Occupational Advisory Council for _____ is expected to contribute to the establishment and/or improvement of the instructional program by:

1. Studying and surveying periodically the educational needs of the students within the council's designated occupational area.

2. Reviewing, analyzing, developing, and proposing policies.

3. Working cooperatively with the administrative, instructional, and non-instructional staff of the occupational programs to develop and operate training programs with procedures which implement policies and recommendations.

4. Facilitating communication between the professional staff of the program and the people and employers of the community.

5. Studying the effects of existing and new educational programs in operation with reference to employability of the graduate or ability of the graduate to proceed to higher level instruction.

6. Serving as a sounding board of opinion on items proposed by the school program staff.

7. Initiating study and proposals on issues pertinent to occupational program improvement.

The Occupational Advisory Council is not regarded as a substitute for any other form of citizen participation in school affairs. It is intended to supplement and stimulate other types of citizen participation. The council will be expected to operate within the guidelines. The Board of Education reserves the right to dissolve the Occupational Advisory Council at any time and for any reason.

In authorizing the development of the Occupational Advisory Council, the Board of Education pledges complete cooperation in the council work. This shall include the appointment of a school representative with full responsibility to work with the Advisory Council and keep all communications open between the school and the council.

ADVISORY COUNCILS
UTILIZING

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ADVISORY COUNCIL OPERATION

After close adherence to proper procedures in organizing an advisory council, it is essential that school officials observe accepted and successful procedures in working with an advisory council on any educational level. The best organizing can be quickly negated by poor or indifferent operation! Such highly important items of procedures as adequate number of meetings, handling of written recommendations, appointing of knowledgeable school representatives, recognition of members, establishing of a rotating system of member replacement, and giving the backing of the school must be strictly adhered to if the advisory council is to be effective over any length of time.

The following operating techniques should be generally followed and carefully adjusted to the local situation. This needs the personal attention of a school or college official empowered to implement the council system. Without such personal attention any advisory council system will be fragmented and overlapping with questionable value to the school.

ADVISORY COUNCIL
SUCCESSFUL OPERATIONAL TECHNIQUES

The following are operational techniques found to be common among successful citizen advisory councils operating in occupational education areas:

. Instruction concerning the operation of advisory councils is given to the members.

. Written guidelines of the council are periodically revised.

. The chairperson is selected from lay members of the council and must have served one year prior to selection (unless council is new).

. Secretarial assistance for the council is provided by the school.

. The council develops and evaluates a yearly program of priorities and work.

. Subcommittees used for intensive studies and surveys must report to the full council for action.

. Outside consultants are used by the council.

. Meetings are held as often as needed to accomplish the program of work, but meet at least quarterly.

. Recommendations by majority vote of the council are submitted in written form to the school.

. Minutes of all meetings are maintained at the school and also forwarded to members of the council, selected administrators, and faculty.

. The council uses school personnel and students as resource persons.

. The council interprets the program to the community.

. Council members are recognized for their work in a number of ways—including a social event, certificates, school cooperation and attitude, publicity, etc.

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE ADVISORY COUNCIL

The school, through its representatives, has convinced the members of the Citizen Advisory Council they are needed and are doing a real service to the school. At the same time the members of the council are aware that their work is advisory only, subject to rules set by the governing body of the school.

The members have been carefully selected and appointed by official letter signed by the school superintendent, president of the educational institution, or a member of the Board of Education. They have received sufficient publicity and recognition to be given a feeling of pride and prestige.

The council members are enjoying being involved with education. They serve voluntarily without compensation.

The school representatives have been candid about school problems and policies, especially pertaining to the educational purpose for which the council was formed. The council considers such problems when formulating realistic recommendations.

Council members are presented with the problems—not answers, and are asked to consider these problems—not told.

There is a desire on the part of council members to work with what is being done and what should be done, rather than what has been done.

The chairperson is the driving force behind the success of the council through leadership and close working relations with the school representatives.

The council members are willing to publicly support the school, especially the program which they represent, and often involve themselves in planned, approved public relation activities.

Most council members are proud of their contribution to the education and training of students and are interested in the future success of each student.

Positive measurable progress in the form of recommendations is constantly being made and evaluated.

The council has been requested by the school representative to study and recommend solutions to priority problems. Often the council has a planned work program for months ahead. Work is accomplished at every meeting.

WRITTEN RECOMMENDATIONS—WHAT HAPPENS

Advice in the form of recommendations is the primary reason for the existence of an advisory council. Unless a council makes recommendations as the result of its group majority action, it becomes a paper council—in other words, ineffective for the purpose for which formed.

A school or college must have an established method of handling the recommendations from their advisory councils. The basic requirements are:

. Recommendations submitted in writing

. School representative takes responsibility, including follow up and report of school decision.

SCHOOL ACTION—COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

It is imperative that a report from the appropriate school administrative authority be received within a reasonable time by the advisory council making the recommendation. Even if the action is an intention to study, it still maintains the morale of the members. Nothing is more devastating to the future of an advisory council than to have a recommendation ignored.

When a school or college receives a recommendation from a duly authorized advisory council, there are three possible actions that may be taken by the appropriate school authority:

. Recommendation implemented as presented

. Recommendation implemented with stated modifications—with explanation

. Recommendation declined—with explanation.

ABSENTEEISM

If an operating council develops a problem of too many members being absent from meetings, making it difficult to have a quorum for group decisions, the problem should be approached quickly by the school administrator. An investigation should be made of the following:

. Do members feel they have only a rubber stamp status

. Has there been autocratic control of the council

. Has there been insufficient work to challenge the council members

. Has the school representative used poor techniques in the relationship with members

. Have meetings been dull, routine, with little enthusiasm or leadership from the chairperson

. Has school authority ignored or watered-down recommendations of the council, making the members feel they are wasting time

. Has the school authority failed to give the council the recognition and status deserved

. Has the school allowed substitute members at meetings.

There are always members who prove to be disinterested or for personal reasons have never been good members and seldom attend. This is the advantage to having the rule as part of the bylaws that any member who misses three consecutive meetings is automatically dropped from the council.

As mentioned in the preceding bulletin on Organizing the Advisory Council, the practice of representatives or alternates attending advisory council meetings should be forbidden by the council rules. This method of correcting absenteeism encourages an ineffective advisory council. Alternates seldom have sufficient knowledge, understanding, or interest of former council proceedings necessary for decisive action. If a majority of the meetings are not attended, it is much better to replace the member.

It is necessary to rotate members. At least one third of the membership should be replaced each year. This allows members who have served long and faithfully to take a rest from this activity and for the council to have new blood each year. This maintains interest and reduces absenteeism.

RECOGNITION OF MEMBERS

From the many methods of recognizing the work of advisory council members, probably the most important can be found in the attitude of both the council chairperson and the school representative. The school representative must make the council members feel their work is appreciated and important to the school or college. They must feel involved. The presiding officer needs to give credit to the individuals when deserved.

An effective way to accomplish recognition is for the school representative to arrange for the chief administrator of the school or college to attend selected meetings of the advisory council each year to give credit for past work. Other accepted means of recognition are:

. Listing the names of council members and their companies or agencies in school publications, program brochures, catalogs, and in media releases

. Inviting council members to employer-employee banquet, or any other important activity sponsored by students from that occupational area

. Certificates of service, special awards, etc., awarded to council members

. Public recognition of service and work

. Invitations to the school for viewing the results of some recommendations

. Offering council recommendations high priority

. Notifying company officials of the school's appreciation for the work of an employee council member.

Another effective way to give recognition to the work of individual members is a summary of their activities and accomplishments. It is suggested that a faculty member be given this responsibility. The summary could include the school chart of the advisory council system, the school policy in regard to advisory councils, and a list of councils by occupational area. The company represented should be shown with the name of each member. The summary could be furnished to the chairperson of each council, selected companies, school administrators, and the school board or board of trustees. Portions of the report could be submitted to media for publicity.

WHAT AN ADVISORY COUNCIL CAN DO

CHECKLIST

NOTE: It is recommended that Advisory Council members and school representatives use this checklist for potential activities. The list is not meant to be all inclusive. Many activities will not apply to a particular council. An advisory council that carefully selects a program of work months in advance is usually effective and successful. The school representative should have a short list of activities which meets school or program priorities.

Each activity is coded to indicate what type of advisory council would most likely be concerned. No coding indicates all types should be concerned.

C - Career Council
VT - Vocational-Technical Council
O - Occupational Council
A - Area Vocational Center Council

HELP FOR TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

C-VT Assisting school, administrators, and instructors in establishing a philosophy of career education

C-VT Providing criteria for awards and prizes to outstanding students

VT Assisting in establishing career education programs and advising on use of proper criteria for evaluation

VT Extending expertise as resource people for clinics, inservice workshops, seminars, and training programs to school occupational education faculty or arranging for others to help

VT Informing the school on changes in the labor market in reference to community, State, and National trends

VT-O Assisting in determination of employable tasks and knowledge for career programs and courses as a preliminary to writing measurable objectives on the course, program, and total program level

VT-O Assisting in establishing teacher qualifications for specific career occupation teaching

VT-O Arranging meetings to establish cooperative relationships between the schools and industry

O Identifying part-time substitute or resource instructors from the community to assist regular teachers in the classroom and/or to teach in specialized program areas

O Assisting in preparing job descriptions

O Suggesting general occupational abilities necessary for a graduate of an occupational area to compete on the community job market

O Identifying potential training stations for placement of students in cooperative education programs.

STUDENT CAREER SELECTION, PLACEMENT, AND EVALUATION

C-VT Assisting in the formulation of a speaker bureau to provide speakers to civic clubs, career day meetings, etc.

C-VT Providing ideas to orient students and teachers in lower grades with the occupational programs

A Providing suggestions for acquainting students in participating schools with the occupational programs available at the area vocational center

VT-O-A Providing information concerning desirable aptitudes, education, and experience preferred for entry level jobs and for higher job level specialization requiring advanced training

C-VT-O Participating in and helping to interpret surveys of local industry manpower needs, job availability, and anticipated employment in the community

C-VT Assisting with procedures for continuous evaluation of the programs and follow-up evaluation of graduates for program accountability

O Periodically evaluating employment opportunities associated with the occupational program

VT Assisting in establishment of procedures for approaching parents to provide occupational information

VT Assisting in the establishment of criteria and qualifications for students to apply for admission to the vocational-technical programs

VT Assisting in establishing certain vocational-technical programs as recognized sources for craft apprenticeships

VT-O Assisting in public relation procedures, both externally and internally, to encourage young people to consider occupational education

VT-O Assisting in procedures for providing information to guidance counselors who encourage students into programs

O Providing specialized vocational literature to teachers, counselors, parents, and students

O Assisting the instructors in formation of accurate, realistic, specialized instructional projects for group and individual instruction

O Assisting in the qualifications of students for certification and licensing

VT-O Arranging interesting and educational plant and/or field visits for students and instructors

Assisting in placement of students in part- and full-time employment and advising on placement of career program graduates.

CAREER INFORMATION AND COMMUNITY-PARENT INVOLVEMENT

C Assisting in the development of evening school skill improvement and technical courses for employed personnel

C Assisting in obtaining cooperation, when needed, from other agencies for career education

VT-O Obtaining needed school equipment and supplies on loan, as gifts, or at special prices

O Evaluating and issuing supporting recommendations on budgetary requests, physical conditions, adequacy of equipment and supplies, laboratory shops, classrooms, etc.

O Assisting in the development and periodic evaluation of course content to assure it is up to date

O Assisting in the establishment of standards of proficiency for employment

O Assisting in the development of production work produced by students

O Establishing and helping to maintain a library of specialized visual aids, magazines, and books concerning industry and business

O Providing, when possible, training resources for exhibit and instructional purposes in classrooms and shops

O Assisting in making cost studies for specialized programs and courses.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

C Supporting career education for the entire school in its direct relationship to the activities of local and State school officials, boards, and legislative groups

C Participating in radio and TV programs designed to sell career education to the public, with school governing board approval

C Assisting in evaluating the public relation policies and actions of the school

O Inviting teachers, counselors, administrators, and students to visit various plants and businesses

Participating in an open house for students, parents, and other adults of the community.

APPLICABLE TO AREA VOCATIONAL CENTERS

A-VT Studying and advising on proper representation for the advisory committee from each participating school community

A-O Aiding in supplying specialized knowledge for site selection, necessary equipment, and facility requirements for an area vocational center

A Assisting in development of curriculum for participating schools to provide a complete sequential training program.

ADVISORY COUNCIL OPERATIONS

Assisting in setting up and implementing a set of rules and bylaws to insure an active permanent advisory council

Providing recognition for outstanding leadership and encouraging involvement.

EFFECTIVENESS AND CRITICISMS

The effectiveness of any advisory council cannot necessarily be evaluated on the basis of recommended changes in the school operation or changes on the program or course level. Administrators should keep in mind that the council has accomplished its responsibilities when recommendations are submitted. The implementation of these recommendations, or modified versions thereof, are the responsibility of school officials. The possibility that some recommendations are contrary to present school policy does not in itself mean the council work was disappointing or of little value.

All advisory councils are not effective—that is too much to expect. An analysis by school officials should prove valuable in realigning the objective of a council for improvement. In some instances certain councils have served their purpose and should be abolished. New personnel, however, often promotes new approaches by a council.

PRECAUTIONS FOR SUCCESS

The chairperson and the school representative should be alert in informing the council that it is advisory only. All recommendations should be in writing. The school or college and its personnel are the source of accountability for the operation of that school system. Do not allow the council to do administrative work.

Be sure to have a standard procedure for handling publicity of advisory council activities. Independent reporting is detrimental to the council.

The council activity should be confined strictly to the improvement of education.

The use of pressure tactics should be avoided. Working through school or college authority for planning, changes in evaluations, and other activities should utilize the positive approach.

Political activity on the part of an advisory council is not a part of its function.

What to teach may be a concern of the advisory council, but how to teach is not.

If the school authorities are cognizant of these precautions, the advisory council will function in its proper role within the school system. Properly organized and operated, a high percentage of advisory councils are successful.